

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments, see page 6, filed 27 March 2008, with respect to the rejections of claims 5-11 and 20-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) have been fully considered and are persuasive. The rejections of claims 5-11 and 20-22 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) have been withdrawn. The remaining claims have been allowed for reasons set forth in the previous office action, mailed 17 March 2007, which are substantially repeated below.

Allowable Subject Matter

2. Claims 1-4 and 12-19 are allowed.

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Independent claim 1 recites a method whereby one of three possible thresholds is selected for use in halftone rendering. The criterion behind the threshold selection is the comparison of the level of error, which is accumulated *via* standard error diffusion, with two different error thresholds. If the accumulated error for both the current pixel and a neighboring pixel are greater than a first error threshold, then the first predetermined intensity threshold is selected. If, however, this condition is not met, a second comparison is performed which compares the accumulated error of a remotely neighboring pixel and a second error threshold. If the accumulated error of the remotely neighboring pixel is greater than the second error threshold, then the second predetermined intensity threshold is selected. If neither the first or second intensity threshold is selected, a third predetermined intensity threshold is selected by default. The selected threshold is then used to render and output the pixel.

Examiner has not discovered this particular and specific form of threshold selection in the prior art, nor has Examiner found a combination of references which would render this particular method obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention. Accordingly, independent claim 1 is deemed allowable over the prior art. Claims 2-4 are deemed allowable at least owing to their dependencies from claim 1.

Independent claim 12 recites a method whereby one of four possible thresholds is selected for use in halftone rendering. The criterion behind the threshold selection is the comparison of the level of error, which is accumulated *via* standard error diffusion, with three different error thresholds. If the

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accumulated error for either one of the current pixel or a neighboring pixel is less than a first error threshold, then the first predetermined intensity threshold is selected. If, however, this condition is not met, a second comparison is performed which compares the accumulated error of a remotely neighboring pixel and a second error threshold. If the accumulated error of the remotely neighboring pixel is less than the second error threshold, then the second predetermined intensity threshold is selected. If neither the first or second intensity threshold is selected, a third comparison is performed which compares the accumulated error of a more remotely neighboring pixel with a third error threshold. If the accumulated error of the more remotely neighboring pixel is less than the third error threshold, then the third predetermined intensity threshold is selected. If neither the first, second or third intensity thresholds are selected, then a fourth predetermined intensity threshold is selected by default. The selected threshold is then used to render and output the pixel.

Examiner has not discovered this particular and specific form of threshold selection in the prior art, nor has Examiner found a combination of references which would render this particular method obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention. Accordingly, independent claim 12 is deemed allowable over the prior art. Claims 13-19 are deemed allowable at least owing to their dependencies from claim 12.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to JAMES A. THOMPSON whose telephone number is (571)272-7441. The examiner can normally be reached on 8:30AM-5:00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Edward L. Coles can be reached on 571-272-7402. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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/Edward L. Coles/
Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 2625

/J. A. T./
Examiner, Art Unit 2625

09 April 2008